Rabi Prospects for 2004-05 and to review preparation for kharif crops of 2005. The assessment of Rabi production done in the Conference has been mentioned above. In the Conference the Government underscored the importance of integrated efforts by Public and Private Institutions like Farmer's Associations, State Agricultural Universities, ICAR Institutes, for addressing the challenges confronting the Agriculture Sector. The Government has initiated steps to ensure increased credit flow to the rural sector and for higher investment in irrigation facilities and towards better resource conservation strategies. Stress has been given to higher seed replacement ratio for hybrid and high yielding varieties, setting up of more plant quarantine stations, and Agricultural Clinics aimed at promoting self employment of agricultural graduates, increased efforts in soil mapping for dry land rainfed areas and de-centralizing extension facilities at district and block leveis.

Regarding Agricultural inputs, like quality seeds, fertilizers etc. efforts are on to ensure their timely availability. Preventive measures to avoid outbreak of pests and diseases affecting crop production, suitable schemes to ensure adequate supply of Agricultural Credit to the farmers also have been initiated.

There is substantial increase in the budgetary allocation for Department of Agriculture & Cooperation in 2005-06 in comparison to 2004-05 as the plan outlay for annual plan 2005-06 is Rs. 4179.32 crores as compared to budget estimates of Rs. 2650.00 crores for 2004-05.

Assistance to Karnataka Veterinary Animal and Fisheries Sciences University

4660. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Karnataka Veterinary Animal and Fisheries Sciences University has been started during 2004-05 at Bidar in Karnataka; and

(b) if so, whether the Karnataka Government has sought any financial assistance for taking up research and other programmes besides providing infrastructure facilities at the new University?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. But it is not possible to give any financial assistance for strengthening and development of agricultural education as the Karnataka Veterinary Animal and Fisheries Sciences University has came into existence from 01 Sept., 2004 when the 10th Five Year Plan in respect of Indian Council of Agricultural Research has already been finalized.

Technology Mission on Rice

4661. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to launch a Technology Mission on rice/paddy so as to increase the production of rice and improve per hectare productivity of rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Central Government have taken note of the very low per hectare productivity of the paddy crop when compared to countries like Japan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken/proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Government is already implementing research and production programmes for increasing production and productivity of rice in the country. Hence there is no proposal to launch technology mission on rice.

(c) and (d) The Government of India is aware of the lower productivity of paddy in India as compared to countries like Japan. During 2001 the productivity of paddy in India was 2964 Kilogram per hectare (kg/ha) as against 7205 kg/ha in he United States of America (USA), 6659 kg/ha in Japan and 6350 kg/ha in China. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is carrying out research for development of new high yielding varieties/hybrids and improved production technologies to increase productivity of paddy in the country.

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Cereals Development Programme in rice based cropping system areas (ICDP-Rice) is under implementation to increase rice production in the country. The scheme has been subsumed under Macro Management Mode of Agriculture with effect from October 2000 to provide flexibility to States based on local needs. Under the scheme assistance is provided for propagation of